

Buckinghamshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education



Annual Report 2011-12

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Foreword from the Chair of SACRE

When I reflect on SACRE meetings I am always impressed with the inspirational educationalists, faith representatives and significant others who are committed to ensuring that the pupils in all our Buckinghamshire schools *develop spiritually, academically, emotionally and morally so that they are able to understand themselves and others and cope with the opportunities, challenges and responsibilities of living in a rapidly changing world.* (Buckinghamshire SACRE Core Vision and Values)



This has been a very significant year for Bucks SACRE. First of all the Bucks Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education appropriately titled Challenging RE for 2011-2016 became the revised model building on the content in the previous 2006-2011, publication allowing for a more creative approach to the delivery of RE. It also develops the progression aspect by containing a pupil-friendly version of the assessing progress statements. There is a CD attached and our ever resourceful Writing Panel has been preparing links to resources on line to enhance the delivery to pupils.

Collective worship and Visits and Visitors have been further topics for action. Guidelines have been prepared by working groups of SACRE members. During the year we have held two community events bringing together faith leaders, school governors and RE teachers to discuss the value of good quality visits to places of worship and facilitate net working amongst local communities. The first was held in Sir William Ramsay School and was based around a piece of work from 2 faith leaders in High Wycombe Rev David Picken from All Saints Church and Imam Sultan Mahmood from the Totteridge Mosque. They had been conducting a dialogue based on their religious beliefs and were able to show to their congregations and groups of school students that there are numerous commonalities and shared beliefs and points of understanding but in addition they could demonstrate courteous disagreement and loving respect in difference.

We had presentations from places of worship about what could be expected from such a visit, an illustrated presentation from a headteacher, member of SACRE, about the value to the pupils and staff of such visits and the guidelines on arranging for and participating in visits to a place of worship were available. Links with the Agreed Syllabus were explored and buzz groups fostered animated discussion amongst the 40 attendees at Sir William Ramsay School.

A further event was held in Aylesbury in the Multi-cultural centre which again was very well attended and valued and this led to the planning of a reflective day for 6th formers with St Mary's Church as the venue. More about this in the next annual report!

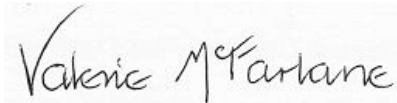
At SACRE meetings we have introduced a new item, which is greatly valued. Members are invited to conclude the meeting by reading a reflection which speaks to them. The first we received was a Sanskrit poem 'Look to this Day'.

In the past we have given pupils a collaborative project around the theme of exploring and sharing experiences of what it means to belong to a faith group or belief system today in modern Britain. At our development day this year members were able to share something of their own spiritual dimensions and the importance to them of their faith and or worshipping group. This was a great privilege and made us as a group become even more connected.

We have welcomed two new members this year; Bob Woollard, a County Councillor and Sushma Sahajpal our Hindu representative. In addition we have celebrated with many members of SACRE: Marion Clayton is now the Chair of Buckinghamshire County Council, Nick Waldron was appointed as headteacher to a newly created school, Buckingham Park Church of England Primary. Jenny Earp and

Jo Fageant were both invited to become, a member of the executive committee on National Association of Teachers of RE and the Secretary of the National Association of SACREs respectively, while Margaret Dean continued with her studies and was awarded a Farmington Fellowship to research language used in delivering RE to pupils with learning difficulties. Several of us enjoyed her presentation. We were also delighted that Lizzie Stone RE Co-ordinator at Holy Trinity School in Marlow joined the Writing Panel.

I give thanks to all members of SACRE for their dedication and thoughtful contributions at our meetings and to headteachers and RE co-ordinators for making us so welcome when we visit their schools both as individuals and as a SACRE body and for providing presentations at our meetings, assuring us that RE is alive and innovatively delivered to pupils in Buckinghamshire schools.



Look to this day

Look to this day, for it is life,
the very life of life.
In its brief course lie
all the realities and truths of existence,
the joy of growth,
the splendour of action,
the glory of power.
For yesterday is but a memory,
and tomorrow is only a vision;
but today well lived
makes every yesterday a memory of happiness
and every tomorrow a vision of hope.
Look well, therefore, to this day.

An ancient Sanskrit poem

1. Standards and quality of provision of RE

Is it just about exams? SACRE is keen to capture a clear picture not just of standards but also, and equally importantly, of the quality of provision for our children and young people of all ages. We are confident that there is a huge amount of really good RE going on and want to be able to share and spread this across all providers. A narrow focus on academic standards alone does not give either the whole or the most important picture of how pupils and students are benefitting from their entitlement RE. Exam results are easily measurable and give some indication of what is being provided (or not) for students in KS 4 and Post-16. However, they do not say anything directly about KS 1-3, nor about the learning experiences in the classroom and beyond. SACRE holds its meetings in schools three times a year and tries to glean something of the wider picture from this. However, this is inevitably very limited. If you believe that your RE provision, or an aspect of it, is interesting, challenging, effective, good or whatever you want to call it, and would like it to be known to SACRE and other providers, we will be better able to celebrate and share the true quality of provision, as well as the basic examination standards, across Buckinghamshire.

1.1 General provision: Primary Schools and Key Stage 3

Monitoring RE in schools continues to be difficult, especially in Key Stages 1-3. Much discussion in SACRE this year has been how we can support schools in providing quality RE for all pupils and the need to work in partnership with schools, academies and faith and belief communities. To do this, we will need to develop a shared understanding of the value of RE and this will be a focus for 2012-13. As part of this, SACRE will collate views and data in the form of a questionnaire during 2012-13. We hope that schools and academies will support us in this, so that all pupils can benefit from their religious education across all providers. RE helps pupils understand themselves and their world, reflect on the meaning and purpose of life, consider spiritual, moral, social and cultural values and express and develop their own beliefs and views whilst learning about and from the views of others. SACRE is here to help all providers in this venture and to work in partnership to promote and develop good practice.

1.2 Examination RS in Buckinghamshire (See appendix 1)

(Please note that all examination data are provisional at the time of publication.)

Religious Education in KS4 and Post-16 remains statutory and the Agreed Syllabus allows flexibility of provision, either through an externally validated specification (without necessarily having to be entered for the examination) or the appropriate Core RE requirements as set out in sections 4.6 and 4.7 (pp 36-39) of the Agreed Syllabus. SACRE encourages providers to allow students in KS4 the opportunity to gain a qualification from their entitlement to RE, so that their achievements in the subject can be recognised. We also encourage Post-16 providers to provide those students who so wish, the opportunity to pursue examination RS as an academic subject that will contribute significantly to their future career choices and their understanding of themselves and the modern world.

Overall, achievement in GCSE Full course in our schools is in line with national results and the percentage of students entered is significantly better than the national picture. More students are entered from Upper Schools than Grammar Schools, both numerically and as a proportion of the total. We do not have accurate data on how much time is allowed for Full GCSE RS, but the expected time is as for any other GCSE – ie approximately 5 lessons per fortnight. Anything less disadvantages the students and makes comparisons with other subjects meaningless.

Performance at Short Course GCSE for the higher grades is significantly higher than nationally, though slightly below for A* - G. Entries in Bucks are nearly half that of the national picture. Bearing in mind that RE is a statutory entitlement for all, it would be of real benefit to our students to have a

qualification to mark and celebrate their learning and achievements. Whilst Short Courses no longer contribute to the school performance tables, they do nonetheless count to what the students take with them into their next phase of education, training and employment. SACRE therefore encourages all schools to allow all students the opportunity to be entered for an external qualification in RS at the end of KS4.

- ◆ Overall, a lower proportion of students in Buckinghamshire was entered than nationally
- ◆ 17 schools (42%) entered more than 90% of their students for either the Full or the Short Course GCSE.
- ◆ Two schools did not enter any students for a RS examination.

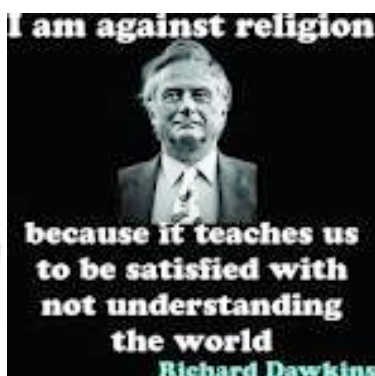
‘A’ Level success is a marked feature of 2012, where entries were double that of the rest of England and results were higher than national grades. In particular, ALL students entered for the ‘A’ level gained a pass, and we want to congratulate them and their teachers on this wonderful achievement! ‘AS’ exam entries were not so successful in comparison to national figures, especially for grades C and above, although the overall pass rate was higher. 19 of our schools entered students for either ‘A’ or ‘AS’ level examinations and eleven of these were Upper Schools.

1.3 Achievement in Special Schools

Children and young people in special schools have a range of needs that need to be met and RE’s rich variety and close links to personal development have a lot to offer in terms of enabling them to achieve worthwhile learning at all stages. SACRE is interested to work in partnership with Special Schools to develop and record learning and progress in RE and to celebrate the work of pupils and of the schools themselves. If you are interested in this area, please contact Bill Moore (bmoore@buckscs.gov.uk) to explore how we can do this.

1.4 A big thank you

SACRE thanks all RE leaders and teachers, in Primary, Secondary and Special schools, for the hard work, enthusiasm and commitment that they bring to RE. It is frequently a lonely job and one which can have great rewards beyond just the academic – which is not always recognised or appreciated. However, the work done in RE lessons for and by children and young people of all ages, lays the foundation for cohesive and flourishing communities in the years to come. Thank you!



How do we encourage children and young people to understand themselves and the world *without* RE?

Examination Data summary 2012 (non-validated)

| GCSE Full Course and Short Course | | | Number of pupils at the end of KS4 | GCSE Full Course | | | | GCSE Short Course | | | | % KS4 pupils entered for Full or SC GCSE |
|--|---------|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|-------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|--|
| | | | | % Entries (out of KS4 pupils) | % A*-A | % A*-C | % A*-G | % Entries (out of KS4 pupils) | % A*-A | % A*-C | % A*-G | |
| | England | | | 4.5 | 31.9 | 73.2 | 98.5 | 64.8 | 18.1 | 53.1 | 95.3 | 69.3 |
| Buckinghamshire Maintained and Academy Schools (incl. Special) | | | 5483 | 28.2 | 35.7 | 73.5 | 98.6 | 32.6 | 37.3 | 69.3 | 97.8 | 60.8 |
| Buckinghamshire Upper Schools | | | 3252 | 33.6 | 19.0 | 63.1 | 98.0 | 25.2 | 7.9 | 38.9 | 95.2 | 58.9 |
| Buckinghamshire Grammar Schools | | | 2138 | 21.1 | 76.1 | 98.5 | 100.0 | 45.3 | 62.1 | 95.1 | 100.0 | 66.5 |

| A' and 'AS' Levels | | | Number of pupils at the end of KS5 | A LEVEL | | | | AS LEVEL | | | | % KS5 pupils entered for A/AS Level |
|--|---------|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|-------------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------------------------------------|
| | | | | % Entries (out of KS5 pupils) | % A*-A | % A*-C | % A*-E | % Entries (out of KS5 pupils) | % A | % A-C | % A-E | |
| | England | | | 2.4 | 25.5 | 79.3 | 98.6 | 2.3 | 21.4 | 65.7 | 92.2 | 4.7 |
| Buckinghamshire Maintained and Academy Schools (incl. Special) | | | 3300 | 5.4 | 29.8 | 85.4 | 100.0 | 2.1 | 14.7 | 55.9 | 97.1 | 7.5 |
| Buckinghamshire Upper Schools | | | 1131 | 5.0 | 14.3 | 69.6 | 100.0 | 1.3 | 13.3 | 40.0 | 93.3 | 6.3 |
| Buckinghamshire Grammar Schools | | | 2169 | 5.6 | 36.9 | 92.6 | 100.0 | 2.4 | 15.1 | 60.4 | 98.1 | 8.1 |

2. Managing the SACRE and Partnership with the LA and Other Key Stakeholders

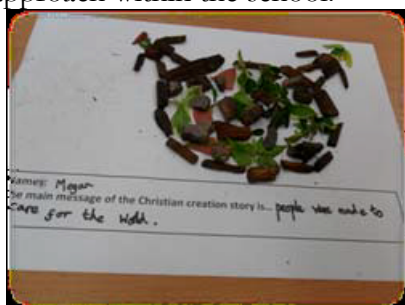
2.1 Meetings

SACRE holds six meetings a year, usually three in schools in the afternoon and three in faith or community centres in the evening. In this way we attempt to model inter-faith-and-belief dialogue within an educational context. We ensure that our meetings are not just business meetings, but an opportunity to learn about and from our schools and the diverse range of living faiths and beliefs in Buckinghamshire. To achieve this each meeting begins with a period of reflective silence followed by a presentation from the school or the host community. We also hold an annual Development Day.

This year we were only able to visit two schools.

On 23rd January 2012 we met at **The Beaconsfield School**, where the Head of RE, Kathryn Taylor, gave us an interesting and informative presentation about the RE curriculum and how the school adapts the Agreed Syllabus. Kathryn is keen to provide her students with a rich curriculum experience and this includes: enrichment days; home-produced booklets: a good range of activities (eg games, P4C, creative, discussion, written); Damaris (<http://www.damaris.org/schools>); RE Today (<http://www.retoday.org.uk/>); links with Kings College London; the use of Media (film, music etc.); ICT – VLE; Role play and drama; and card sorts activities. Students value the opportunity to think about their own and others' beliefs and ideas in a challenging but safe environment. SACRE was particularly impressed by the use of media to engage and challenge students and also by Kathryn's positive attitude towards whole-school developments being introduced in 2012, which will allow for greater depth in GCSE as a full option for those students who choose it.

On Monday 21st May we met at **Holy Trinity CE School**, Marlow, where the RE Co-ordinator, Lizzie Stone, welcomed us and shared the mixed planning and rich experience of RE in her school. This includes, again, a good range of learning experiences, including: Art; Visitors; Poetry; Reading; Letters; Posters; Leaflets; Drama (hot seating, freeze frames etc); DVDS; Artefacts; and P4C, which is a major approach within the school.



RE takes the lead for the creative curriculum for one half term in each year group. This puts RE on an equal footing with other subjects and ensures that pupils' learning in RE links with their learning in other subjects. The school also has a themed week across the whole school for Christmas and Easter (highly appropriate for a CE VA School), in which each year group approaches the theme from a different perspective to ensure progression. SACRE was very struck by the thought and creativity put into RE by Lizzie and the staff of the school. As one member said, Lizzie 'had given a barnstorming performance' and he wondered how Year 3 dealt with the theme of 'Hope and Despair' as their Easter theme? Lizzie showed us that, at an age-appropriate level, and by building bridges with the children's own experiences, children can grasp deep and important concepts. Lizzie also asked SACRE if it would be able to produce more support material, and a list of visitors and places to visit. We assured her we

are working on this!

Other venues included the Teaching and Learning Centre; Holy Trinity CE Church, Hazlemere, at which we received a lively and engaging talk about the life and work of the church in the local and international community; the High Wycombe Evangelical Baptist Church, where we learned about the work of the Church, its commitment to Baptism and were introduced to the wonderful phrase ‘exciting discussions’ to refer to interfaith dialogue and work; and lastly at the SGI-UK National Buddhist Centre, Taplow where we learnt about the history, practice and mindfulness of this Buddhist society, and its work in the local, national and global arenas.

Matters discussed included:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Linking faith Communities and schools through faith workshops | The SACRE Development Plan | Support and resources for the Agreed Syllabus |
| The implementation of the new Agreed Syllabus | The role of SACRE and its relation to, or partnership with, schools and academies | SMSC |
| Support and advice for Collective worship in schools | The Curriculum Review | A proposed 6 th Form Conference for Holocaust Memorial Day |

2.2 SACRE Development Plan 2011 - 2014

SACRE finalised its Development Plan for the next 3 years and will use this as the basis for prioritising its work. It is in 5 sections, in line with the national guidance for SACREs, and can be viewed on the SACRE website on the Bucks Grid for Learning. We hope you find these priorities helpful.

(<http://www.bucksgfl.org.uk/course/view.php?id=459>)

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| <p>1. To promote the value of good RE so that schools provide the best quality RE learning that they can.</p> <p>We will achieve this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) having good knowledge of what schools are doing; b) listening to schools so that we can provide appropriate support and challenge; c) supporting RE leaders in their ability to plan, provide and monitor quality RE. | <p>2. To develop effective working relationships that will enable SACRE and its partners to support quality learning in RE.</p> <p>We will achieve this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) adapting to new structures and relationships with schools; b) involving children and young people; c) engaging with faith and belief as expressed by individuals and communities in and around Buckinghamshire d) raising the profile of SACRE | <p>3. To provide support for the new Agreed Syllabus so that pupils receive challenging and stimulating RE in a range of contexts.</p> <p>We will achieve this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) giving the AS a high profile as a means of planning challenging and meaningful learning; b) monitoring teacher and pupil views of the AS c) providing support material to enable teachers to plan and teach in line with the expectations; d) linking teachers to a range of resources. | <p>4. To raise the profile and quality of Collective worship in schools so that pupils receive a meaningful experience that helps to promote their Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Development.</p> <p>We will achieve this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) promoting the educational value of SMSC and its significance in Ofsted 2012 b) providing guidance and support based on best practice in our schools and | <p>5. To work with schools, faith and belief communities and other partners to promote resilient individuals and communities so that children from all backgrounds are able to flourish and thrive together.</p> <p>We will achieve this by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) forming links between values, ethos and achievement; b) promoting knowledge and understanding of, and respect for, different beliefs and practices; c) exploring with pupils and with adults experiences and concepts to do with ‘identity-in-difference’ d) developing capacity to |
|---|---|---|---|---|

| | | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|--|---|--------------------|
| | e) linking with ITT providers | | nationally c) exploring existing resources and making them known to schools d) engaging with schools and pupils to identify and celebrate good practice | handle controversy |
|--|-------------------------------|--|---|--------------------|

2.3 SACRE Development Day 20th June 2012

“This was quite memorable for me personally because it was the first time since joining the Bucks SACRE that I had been asked to give an account of my beliefs, following those of Sushma, Barry and Val. I found it quite difficult but emotionally liberating to be respected as making a valid contribution to the work of SACRE.” (Elaine Lever; Humanist co-opted member)

We have a lot of expertise and experience in SACRE that should be helpful to schools. What we have to do is make sure that we can support schools effectively.

We recognise that schools find Collective worship problematic on a number of levels, both to do with its rationale and the obstacles to effective provision.

Over the year 2012-13 SACRE will produce policy support, resources and advice for good quality educational Collective worship which remains within the statutory requirements.

2.4 Faith groups and schools

SACRE organised two ‘Community events’ over the year to bring schools and faith communities together, the first, in Sir William Ramsay School on 10th Nov 2011, the second in Aylesbury multi-cultural centre on 28th June 2012. The programme and materials are available on the SACRE website (<http://www.bucksgfl.org.uk/course/view.php?id=459>). From these events, we have collated some contacts that schools have used and would recommend, and of local people who are willing to support schools in either collective worship or community cohesion and RE. These too are available on the BGfL [SACRE page](#).

Nick Waldron, formerly headteacher at Hazlemere CE School, shared the experiences of children on various visits to faith communities and how they benefit from such provision. This inspirational presentation was very much appreciated by all attendees and showed the true value of visits, visitors and providing opportunities for children and young people to engage with people from different faiths and backgrounds. The work of Wycombe Multi-faith groups and the Aylesbury Interfaith Group was also shared, especially their work in and with schools.

3. Effectiveness of the Agreed Syllabus

3.1 Challenging RE 2011-16: key points

This is not so much a new Agreed Syllabus, as a redrafted and amended one.

- minimal change - schools may carry on with their planning



- using the current Agreed Syllabus with no need to change;
- less prescription of content
- the structure is brought together more coherently;
- will provide only what is statutory with no set out units and support materials will be produced separately;
- more flexible ways to plan and structure their RE whilst ensuring that they provided a coherent and meaningful experience for their pupils.

The new structure makes the process and progression more clear, with much less content

1. Introduction
2. Educational rationale, which has been pulled together for all stake-holders in schools
3. Basis for planning quality RE
4. What pupils will learn – a much slimmed down framework based on enquiry
5. Progression and assessment, including pupil-friendly APP

You can access the PowerPoint presentation from the launch of the Agreed Syllabus on the BGfL, [Agreed Syllabus section](#)

3.2 Why teach RE? *“I could write paragraphs on the value of RE in providing one of the few opportunities in the busy school day for students to learn about each others’ beliefs and culture.” Elaine Lever*

RE is in a difficult position. It is not part of the National Curriculum, but it is a statutory part of the school (basic) curriculum and the Government is very clear that all pupils in all types of school should receive their entitlement to RE (see the letter from Nick Gibb on the BGfL). In our Agreed Syllabus, we are very clear about the value of RE and why it should be given adequate priority:

“RE helps pupils with their literacy, creativity, personal development and critical thinking;
it provides opportunities for and develops their ability to reflect on experience;
it develops debating, reasoning, self-expression, relationships, and self-understanding;
it helps pupils’ and staff’s understanding of identity-in-difference....
their search for meaning, purpose and value....
and their sense of humour and enjoyment!
It helps schools with their ethos, values....
sense of community and belonging, relationships for learning....
behaviour, expectations and aspirations.

It helps society to grow, share, understand....
deal with controversy, learn to disagree whilst living together in community....
explore meaning and truth, live by values....
understand – and respectfully challenge and be challenged by - people of different lifestyles, beliefs and practices.

It helps us as humans to explore visions of humanity and at the same time reflect on the depths to which that humanity can sink.....

In short, good RE is just what schools and society need to help develop some of the most important skills, attitudes, knowledge, understanding and dispositions that we would want for our children and young people. Can we imagine a future where people are unable to handle the big questions and concepts of life?

‘Challenging RE’ is a most appropriate title for this Agreed Syllabus. RE should be academically, personally, spiritually, morally and socially challenging for us all. We hope you and your pupils will rise to these challenges, get a lot out of the Agreed Syllabus and, over time, be able to contribute to it.”

3.3 Views from the schools

Early views from schools has been overwhelmingly positive, citing in particular the greater clarity for planning, the greater flexibility, with clear requirements, for content and the continuity with the previous Agreed Syllabus, which is the first layer of support materials.

Where schools have expressed concern, it has largely been based on a lack of understanding of the above. A few schools have said that they found the detail in the units of the previous syllabus very useful and are disappointed that they are no longer in the new one. We can reassure you that you can continue to use the old unite: it is just that there is now even greater flexibility than before.

3.3 Support and training

Bill Moore can provide twilight Inset for whole-school staff focusing on planning and implementing the Agreed Syllabus and especially classroom techniques to enhance pupils' learning. If you want your school to have bespoke RE training, please contact Bill on 01296 382441, or bmoore@buckscc.gov.uk

4. Collective worship

4.1 The value of good Collective Worship

Collective worship is not the same as congregational worship, nor should it be; it is an educational process which provides opportunities for the whole school community to:

- ◆ celebrate together
- ◆ think deeply together
- ◆ build a sense of community
- ◆ share common values
- ◆ foster corporate identity
- ◆ affirm the individual and the community
- ◆ encourage a reflective approach to living
- ◆ deepen every individual's capacity for emotional response
- ◆ look beyond the physical and the material (and the measurable!)
- ◆ share experiences and possibilities of the transcendent – looking beyond the immediate

Done well, collective worship is an essential ingredient of an outstanding school, which contributes to, but goes well beyond, any measurable outcomes-based framework. It gets to the core of what education is all about and what school is for. SACRE is keen to work with schools to support developments and share your good practice, exciting discussions and engaging resources and visitors. This is about humanising our education and deepening the experiences and perspectives of the pupils and students.

4.2 Supporting schools

SACRE will provide guidance, using the most recent National information, over 2012-13. This will include places to visit and visitors to enrich the educational experience of collective worship.

4.3 Visits and visitors

SACRE really wants to build a good, updated and evidenced source of good practice and good quality. Please send us your schools' visits and visitors that you can recommend so that other schools can

benefit from your experience and you can benefit from others. With a locally agreed syllabus, this information-sharing is vitally important. Please send your contributions to amontague@buckscc.gov.uk so that they can be added.

4.4 Determinations

There were no determinations sought in 2012. Please address any requests for a determination to aholley@buckscc.gov.uk.

5. SACRE and School Improvement

5.1 INSET and Training

In January 2012, Primary Co-ordinators attended a conference on RE and Literacy, and how we can use literacy to explore RE issues and develop key language, communication and literacy skills through RE. Simon Wrigley provided a stimulating session on using story in RE and Sushma Sahajpal (the Hindu representative on SACRE) led a session on creativity in the classroom entitled: 'Storytelling and Sparkle Lamps'. Both sessions went down very well indeed with delegates.

5.2 SMSC

SACRE is delighted that the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of pupils is an integral part of the Inspection framework. Training is being provided by the School Improvement Service. SMSC can be a key ingredient in good and outstanding practice, and can also contribute to Requires Improvement and Serious Weakness judgements, so it is important for schools to prioritise developments in their provision. This is especially important for leadership and teaching, but also for behaviour. It is good to see that part of the Ofsted description for SMSC is that 'pupils take a pride in their school': this only occurs when schools are clear and positive about their ethos and climate.

We strongly recommend to schools that they take this opportunity to review their purposes and aims, and to see SMSC as more than just an Ofsted concern. A brief, non-Ofsted description that will help teachers and others to see the educational value is below:

Spiritual: to do with questions of meaning, purpose and value in life; what does it mean to be human? to be me?

Moral: involves raising questions about right and wrong and how we decide, based on our spiritual values. How should we live our lives? Moral issues.

Social: to do with relationships between people and groups of people, based on our moral values.

Cultural: reflects different ways of experiencing, responding to and expressing the above. How these values are lived out.

5.3 Learning and teaching

"RE is a subject which covers a wider field of knowledge and experience than any other. Properly-taught, it fosters understanding and sharing of common values across the whole spectrum of belief." Elaine Lever

Learning in RE, as in other subjects, needs to engage pupils of all backgrounds, ages and abilities. The range of issues explored in RE is ideal for providing opportunities for deep and meaningful learning. Questioning is central to good RE, alongside reflection and creativity. The Agreed Syllabus has been designed to facilitate such approaches, but it is what goes on in the classroom that makes the real difference. INSET is available to support teachers in using techniques like P4C, Stilling and the use of artefacts to enrich learning. These techniques contribute significantly to SMSC, and can also be used in other subjects to improve learning and teaching and develop thinking and reflecting on experience.

Techniques such as those below are strongly encouraged:

| | | | |
|-------------|---------------------|---------------|----------------|
| Experience | Stilling activities | Literacy | Questioning |
| Music | /reflection | • S&L | Artefacts |
| Art | Festivals | • Reading and | Philosophy for |
| Drama | • What? | Writing | children |
| Emotional | • Why? | • drama | |
| development | • How? | Diamond 9 | |

5.4 Interfaith and Community Cohesion

Cohesive school communities are an integral part of good SMSC. SACRE is able to support schools in many ways regarding this, but in particular by providing opportunities for interfaith dialogue and community cohesion. SACRE, in partnership with local interfaith groups, can support whole day school 6th Form conferences and run County-wide student conferences for interfaith dialogue and exploring spiritual issues. We hope that schools will take advantage of this, not just for 6th Formers. If we are to build cohesive communities, it is vital that our children and young people experience genuine encounters with people of many faiths, beliefs and backgrounds, including inter-generational work. We were disappointed that we did not get sufficient interest from schools for such a 6th form conference in 2012, and hope that school leaders and RE leaders will work in partnership with us to prepare our children and young people to live in a multi-faith, belief and cultural world. In this way, we can all learn and grow through challenging RE!



Appendix 1. SACRE Membership (September 2011 – July 2012)

In accordance with statute, the Buckinghamshire Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education is composed of four groups:

Group A – Other Denominations and Faiths

Group B – The Church of England

Group C – Teacher representatives

Group D – The Local Authority

| Group | Name | Represents |
|-----------------|---|-------------------|
| A | Mrs Val McFarlane (Chair) | Quaker |
| | Vacancy | Roman Catholic |
| | Mrs Frankie Fisher | Methodist |
| | Mr R Kenrick-Jones | Baptist |
| | Mrs. Sushma Sahajpal (wef 21.5.12) | Hindu |
| | Mr Zahid Jawed | Muslim |
| | Mr Barry Shine | Jewish |
| | Vacancy | Sikh |
| | Steve Terry | Buddhist |
| | Other faiths yet to be represented | Pentecostal |
| B | Ms Jo Fageant | Church of England |
| | Mrs Jenny Earp | Church of England |
| | Mr. Nick Waldron | Church of England |
| | Mrs Lesley Turville | Church of England |
| C | Vacancy | NUT |
| | Mrs. Margaret Dean | ATL |
| | Vacancy | NASUWT |
| | Mrs Olwyn Davison-Oakley | NAHT |
| | Vacancy | ASCL |
| D | Cllr Marion Clayton | County Council |
| | Cllr David Watson | County Council |
| | Cllr Zahir Mohammed | County Council |
| | Cllr Bob Woollard | County Council |
| Co-opted | Mrs Elaine Lever | Humanist |

SACRE is advised and supported by **Bill Moore**, School Improvement Adviser, who can be contacted on 01296 382441 or via email: bmoore@buckscc.gov.uk.

The Clerk to the SACRE, **Allison Holley**, can be contacted at:

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